



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Dan Burgette Receives Wilderness Stewardship Award

Dan Burgette, long-time Grand Teton National Park ranger, now retired, received the *Wes Henry National Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Award* at a ceremony held in Missoula, Montana on Friday, January 21, 2005. National Park Service (NPS) colleagues nominated Burgette for this prestigious award to recognize his lengthy Park Service career, dedicated to the ideals of wilderness preservation.



Burgette Receives Plaque from Rick Potts

The *Wes Henry National Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Award* is an annual recognition given by the NPS to an outstanding wilderness champion. Its purpose is to reward persons and/or groups from within the agency who have made significant contributions towards the protection of wilderness resources within parks. These outstanding contributions can involve education and interpretation, management of natural, cultural and social resources, planning, protection, and/or maintenance operations. Recipients receive both a commemorative plaque and monetary award.


Throughout his 30-year NPS career, Burgette consistently shaped and promoted the standards and ethics for managing wilderness areas in several national parks where he worked. He helped to develop and expand a wilderness management plan for Grand Teton National Park and during the past 20 years, he took a leadership role in the park's wilderness program.

Burgette served as chairman of Grand Teton's Wilderness Committee and became the primary motivator for implementing a "minimum tool analysis" process for conducting all backcountry maintenance projects in the Teton Range. He developed the park's first backcountry campsite monitoring program in 1982 and expanded that work to include monitoring of overall human impacts throughout the backcountry. Data collected helped to direct work done by wilderness rehabilitation crews and led to a project involving the reseeding and transplanting of native alpine vegetation to restore heavily impacted areas at the 11,600 foot elevation on the Grand Teton. When high-altitude human waste management became a problem in the Teton Range, Burgette helped start a "pack-it-out" system to address this human health and wilderness protection issue.

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Burgette wrote and presented a paper titled, “Wilderness and Park Fire Policies and Programs: Vision of the Future” at a 1993 symposium on Fire in Wilderness and Park Management. He served as a panelist at the 1987 National Outdoor Leadership School’s conference on Wilderness Education. Over the past several years, he also worked on several wilderness projects with other federal agency personnel and members of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee. Recently, Burgette served on the Intermountain Region Wilderness Executive Committee and worked on a special project dealing with resource issues and impacts occurring along the Mexico-USA border at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona.

Burgette has continued to personally help people discover and define wilderness for themselves. Through serving as a wilderness educator at conferences, lectures, and committee meetings, he has expanded the wilderness vision and reminded participants that wilderness is necessary for many reasons. Burgette stated, “The challenge for managers is to balance wilderness idealism with pragmatic realities involving differing values, human impacts, the desire by large numbers of visitors to enjoy recreational experiences in natural areas, and the desire to leave opportunities for people a century from now to experience wildlands and escape from an artificial world, just as we can today.”

—NPS—
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